

Communiqué

Meeting of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia 28 June 2012 in the AHPRA National office, Melbourne Victoria

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (the National Board or NMBA) is the national regulator for nursing and midwifery in Australia. It is established under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law*, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law). The National Board meets monthly and discusses a range of issues, the most important of which are published in this Communiqué.

1 July 2012 marks the second anniversary of the establishment of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme). Western Australia will celebrate this anniversary on 18 October 2012. The National Board was established with the appointment of 12 Board members (eight health practitioners and four community members) on 31 August 2009 by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (Ministerial Council).

The National Board members' inaugural term of office ends on 30 August 2012. Appointment of the twelve member National Board for the next three year term of office is currently being finalised by the Ministerial Council at which time the appointments will be formally announced.

[National Board budget and Health Profession Agreement for 2012 – 2013](#)

The National Board approved the Budget for the 2012 - 2013 financial year and advised on the schedule of fees as well as the Health Profession Agreement between the National Board and AHPRA. This Agreement sets out the services AHPRA will provide in supporting the National Board to regulate the nursing and midwifery professions during 2012-2013.

The National Board's Schedule of Fees and the Health Profession Agreement will be finalised and subsequently published on the NMBA website

[Better, clearer communications](#)

The National Board is implementing a framework for communication activities that makes it easier for nurses, midwives and students of nursing and midwifery, education providers, employers and other key stakeholders to engage with the National Board and keep informed about nursing and midwifery practice in Australia.

Amongst these, are the National Board's monthly communiqués which are published on the website after each National Board meeting. The communiqués outline key National Board decisions and important changes affecting nurses and midwives.

Another important information resource is the National Board's newsletter. The first issue was published in March this year and the second issue will be published soon. The NMBA Newsletter provides a good overview of important information and is an excellent source for people with an interest in nursing and midwifery practice in Australia.

[2012 Renewal of Registration – a preliminary review](#)

The 2012 nursing and midwifery renewal of registration has set a new record in health practitioner registration in Australia. More than 333,000 nurses and midwives were due to renew their registration by 31 May 2012 – 100,000 more than were due to renew at the same time in 2011. The extra 100,000 practitioners over 12 months is explained by the synchronising of renewal dates to 30 May and a small net increase in total numbers of Registered Nurses, Midwives and Enrolled Nurses. This is the largest single renewal of registration ever undertaken in Australia.

Ninety-three per cent of the nurses and midwives due to renew, did so on time – an impressive 94% of them online. This compares to 90% of nurses and midwives renewing on time in 2011, 85% online. This extra 9% in online renewals amounts to 30,000 fewer paper applications being assessed and processed by AHPRA.

The vast majority of nurses and midwives who have applied to renew have been granted registration and their details updated on the public register. In the small number of cases where nurses and midwives have lodged an application which requires further assessment, these nurses and midwives can keep practising while it is being assessed.

AHPRA's online services now give nurses and midwives the ability to 'opt out' of renewing their registration. This helps AHPRA to better understand the number of practitioners who have actively opted out of registration, compared to those who did not apply on time. Nurses or midwives who 'opt out' of renewing their registration or who allow it to lapse must submit a new application for registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia if they wish to practise again.

The National Board is extremely pleased to see so many nurses and midwives heed the call to renew registration on time and online. The National Board with AHPRA have benefitted from the support of key stakeholders including government departments, employers and professional associations as part of the comprehensive communications campaign. This invaluable assistance and support is acknowledged and appreciated. The results show the systematic benefits of national regulation in providing nurses and midwives with a smooth and simple renewal experience.

A review of the renewal of registration campaign will be undertaken to identify areas for learning and future improvement. Any feedback or ideas are always welcome. For further information, or to provide your feedback, please contact communications@ahpra.gov.au.

National review of Enrolled Nurse Competency Standards

The National Board has approved the appointment by AHPRA of a project team led by Professor Wendy Cross, Head of the School of Nursing and Midwifery at Monash University in Melbourne Victoria with Curtin University in Perth, Western Australia to review the existing NMBA (formerly ANMC) National Competency Standards for Enrolled Nurses.

The primary purpose of this significant 18 month project is to revise the current NMBA Competency Standards for Enrolled Nurses for relevance and currency against the contemporary role and scope of practice of Enrolled Nurses. These competency standards are to be revised using the best available evidence to ensure a strong foundation for the education and assessment of enrolled nurses into the future. This project will be undertaken in a number of phases and across all jurisdictions in a multiplicity of settings. While separate phases demonstrate the various components of the work required, it is anticipated that some stages will run concurrently. Stakeholder consultation will be a key component of the project which is scheduled to commence within the next month and complete in September 2013.

Management of nurses, midwives and students of nursing and midwifery with a Blood-borne Virus

The National Board agreed to work in partnership with other National Boards and AHPRA to consider the new *Australian National Guidelines for the management of health care workers known to be infected with blood-borne viruses* developed by the Communicable Diseases Network Australia (CDNA) and endorsed by the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Committee (AHMAC) on 28 February 2012.

It is anticipated that these National Guidelines will form the basis of the National Board's approach to the effective and sensitive regulation of nurses, midwives and students of nursing and midwifery with blood-borne viruses.

Depending upon the outcome of this internal review and the extent (if any) to which the National Board may need to differ its regulatory guidelines from the CDNA National Guidelines, a public consultation may be required to elicit stakeholders views on the proposed regulatory guidelines.

Current National Board consultations

The National Board consults on a range of important issues for the nursing and midwifery professions. This may be profession specific or in partnership with some or all National Boards and AHPRA. Feedback from these consultations informs the development of registration standards, codes, standards, guidelines and policies that support the Board's role of protecting the public and facilitating access to health services.

[Public consultation on International Criminal History Checks](#)

The National Board is working in partnership with other National Boards and AHPRA to consult on options for refining international criminal history checks used to assess applications for registration as a health practitioner in Australia.

Under the National Scheme, National Boards develop registration standards that every registered health practitioner must meet, once they have been approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council. One of these registration standards relates to criminal history, which is consistent across all National Boards.

The current approach involves checking Australian criminal history through [CrimTrac](#) and requiring applicants to sign a declaration disclosing any criminal history outside Australia. When a criminal history is disclosed, further investigations are made and the criminal history is assessed according to the criminal history registration standard.

The National Boards must decide whether this approach is adequate or if they should increase the scrutiny of applicants' international criminal histories. In effect, the National Boards must balance their responsibility under the National Law to protect the public, with the need to ensure there is no unnecessary red tape in assessing and managing applications for registration as a health practitioner in Australia.

Details of the options under consideration and background information in relation to international criminal history checks are published in a [consultation paper](#). The National Board is distributing the consultation paper to nursing and midwifery stakeholders via email during the week commencing Monday 2 July 2012 to seek input on this complex issue. Feedback on the consultation is due by 17 August 2012.

[Update on Audit Project](#)

The National Board has endorsed an extended pilot to be conducted of the audit process relating to compliance by health practitioners with the mandatory registration standards during October and November 2012. The registration standards include:

- Criminal History
- Continuing Professional Development
- Recency of Practice
- Professional Indemnity Insurance Arrangements.

This extended pilot builds on the recently concluded initial audit pilot with the Pharmacy profession which tested the audit framework endorsed by all National Boards. The outcomes of the initial audit pilot will inform improvements in processes of the audit framework as well as improvements to the implementation of the health practitioner audit function.

Three National Boards have agreed for their professions to participate in this extended audit

[Accredited programs of study leading to registration and endorsement](#)

The National Board approved for five years the following program of study as providing a qualification for the purposes of registration or endorsement:

- Queensland University of Technology – Master of Nursing Science (Nurse Practitioner)
- Queensland University of Technology - Bachelor of Nursing
- Queensland University of Technology - Bachelor of Nursing/Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Psychology)
- Queensland University of Technology - Bachelor of Nursing/Bachelor of Exercise and Movement Science
- Queensland University of Technology - Bachelor of Nursing /Bachelor of Health Science (Public Health)
- Queensland University of Technology - Bachelor of Nursing/Bachelor of Health Science (Paramedic)

- Curtin University - Master of Nursing (Nurse Practitioner)
- Curtin University – Bachelor of Science (Midwifery)
- Curtin University – Graduate Diploma in Midwifery
- University of Southern Queensland – Master of Midwifery
- Flexible Advance Creative Training Solutions (FACTS) – Diploma of Nursing
- Durack Institute of Technology – Diploma of Nursing
- Marr Mooditj Training Inc – Diploma of Nursing
- TAFE NSW – Diploma of Nursing

The National Board approved the following major change to the program of study approval end date, campuses and partnership arrangements to be included in the existing Approved Programs of Study list:

- Goulburn Ovens TAFE (GOTAFE) – Diploma of Nursing
- Queensland University of Technology - Bachelor of Nursing/Bachelor of Midwifery
- Great Southern Institute of Technology- Diploma of Nursing
- South West Institute of Technology- Diploma of Nursing
- Curtin University- VTEC- Diploma of Nursing
- Celtic Training and Consultancy- Diploma of Nursing
- Yourlife Health and Learning Inc- Diploma of Nursing
- Central Institute of Technology- Diploma of Nursing
- Challenger Institute- Diploma of Nursing
- Australian Nursing and Midwifery Education Centre- Diploma of Nursing
- The University of Notre Dame, VET – Diploma of Nursing
- West Coast Institute of Training – Diploma of Nursing
- NSW Health- Certificate IV in Nursing
- Australian Centre for Further Education- Initial Registration Course for Division 1 Overseas Registered Nurses
- Flinders University- Master of Nursing (Nurse Practitioner)
- Edith Cowan University- Master of Nursing (Nurse Practitioner)
- University of South Australia- Bachelor of Midwifery (includes pathways of undergraduate and post registration)
- Edith Cowan University- Bachelor of Science (Nursing)
- Institute of Health and Nursing Australia- Initial Registration Course for Division 1 Overseas

Registered Nurses

- Institute of Health and Nursing Australia- Registration Bridging Program (Registered Nurse)

For more detailed information please go the [approved program of study lists](#) of the National Boards website.

Website and receiving important information by email

Further information about the National Board can be found at: www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au. Nurses and midwives are encouraged to refer to the site for news and updates on Standards, Codes and Guidelines relating to their professions.

Nurses and midwives are also encouraged to provide their email address to AHPRA (by updating their contact details online). This will enable the National Board to send e-newsletters and other important information about the professions, and AHPRA to contact nurses and midwives about important registration or renewal information.

Ms Anne Copeland

Chair, Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia

2 July 2012

For more information

- Follow the Board on Twitter! Join us via www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au and keep up to date with regular Board news and updates.
- Visit www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au under *Contact Us* to lodge an online enquiry form
- For registration enquiries: 1300 419 495 (within Australia) +61 7 3666 4911 (overseas callers)